

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-15. (Canceled).

16. (Original) A process for production of metallic nickel powder, the process comprising:

treating the powder in a carbonic acid water solution; and
heating the powder in an oxidizing atmosphere.

17. (Original) The process for production of metallic nickel powder according to claim 16, wherein the metallic nickel powder obtained by a contact reaction of nickel chloride gas and a reducing gas is treated in a carbonic acid water solution and is heated in an oxidizing atmosphere.

18. (Original) The process for production of metallic nickel powder according to claim 16, wherein the treatment in a carbonic acid water solution is performed at a pH in a range of pH 5.5 to 6.5.

19. (Original) The process for production of metallic nickel powder according to claim 16, wherein the treatment in a carbonic acid water solution is performed at a temperature in a range of 0 to 100°C.

20. (Original) The process for production of metallic nickel powder according to claim 16, wherein the heat treatment in an oxidizing atmosphere is performed at a temperature in a range of 200 to 400°C.

21. (Original) The process for production of metallic nickel powder according to claim 16, wherein the metallic nickel powder is treated in a carbonic acid water solution, is dried, and is heated in an oxidizing atmosphere.

22. (New) The process for production of metallic nickel powder according to claim 16, wherein the nickel powder is washed with pure water, and the treating of the powder in the carbonic acid water solution is performed by blowing carbonic acid gas into a water slurry of the metallic nickel powder after the washing with pure water.

23. (New) The process for production of metallic nickel powder according to claim 16, wherein the average particle diameter of the metallic nickel powder is in a range of from 0.05 to 1 μm .

24. (New) The process for production of metallic nickel powder according to claim 16, wherein the specific surface area by BET of the metallic nickel powder is in a range off from 1 to 20 m^2/g .

25. (New) The process for production of metallic nickel powder according to claim 16, wherein the shape of the metallic nickel powder is spherical.

26. (New) The process for production of metallic nickel according to claim 16, wherein the metallic nickel powder is for a conductive paste.

27. (New) The process for production of metallic nickel powder according to claim 16, wherein the metallic nickel powder is for a multilayer ceramic capacitor.

28. (New) The process for production of metallic nickel powder according to claim 16, wherein the powder that is treated in a carbonic acid water solution and is heated in an oxidizing atmosphere is a metallic nickel powder obtained by an atomization thermal decomposition in which nickel compound easily decomposed by heat is atomized and thermally decomposed.